

Emeline Walker

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To the the Public Health Committee in Support of HB6200,

My name is Emeline Walker and I used to live in Newtown, CT. I also have Lyme Disease. I have had the disease for years now and almost to the day every year (knock on wood, it's been two years without a relapse) I have gotten a new occurrence of Lyme. Personally speaking, it is a hard thing to live with. I take immune strengtheners everyday and I get sick at the drop of a hat. If you were sick with the flu last month and pass me on the street, I am likely to catch it. I will spend the rest of my life on prescription migraine medication due to a symptom of Lyme Disease. My freshman year in college, I had Lyme Disease the first semester and almost flunked out because I was too weak to get out of bed most days.

This bill is so important because so many people go untreated. Doctors don't want to do the expensive and complicated testing. Well, tough cookies. Lyme Disease affects about 70,000 people a year as of 2007. The symptoms are debilitating and possibly fatal if untreated. People who already have Lyme have it for life and when they are struck with a reoccurrence of the disease, know the symptoms; muscle and joint pain, extreme fatigue, headaches and stiffness. These are not fun symptoms. My sophomore year in college, when I went to my campus health center, they refused to test me for Lyme. I knew why I was so tired and weak, but they did not want to do the test. They told me and I quote, " It is a really expensive test. You're not sick, you're just stressed out. Try getting more sleep." So I went to the city hospital to be tested and guess what? I had Lyme Disease. If I had not known any better, I could have gone untreated and god knows where I would have been.

The test is expensive and complicated, but it shouldn't be. It should be something that, especially in New England, people are being regularly tested for. I, for one, am all for making it part of the yearly physical that people are required to get. Health Insurance companies should be ready and willing to cover some if not all the testing costs because, in the long run it will save time and money to nip Lyme in the butt before letting it go unnoticed for weeks or months. It will cost a heck of a lot more if a person ends up bed ridden or hospitalized or on medication for the rest of their life because one doctor wasn't willing to test them in the very beginning.

It is so important to make the public aware of the affects this disease can have. There should be increased public notices about what symptoms to look for, treatment options and most importantly, prevention tips.

I don't know what else to tell you, except that I will have Lyme Disease until the day I die. That is not to say that I won't live a long, happy life, but I am sure glad I had a doctor who was willing to test me for Lyme and treat it right from the start; otherwise I may not be here writing this testimonial to you all today. Thank you for your time and consideration.